

The Hive Mind Adventure

Adventure by Jeff Leddra

Duration 16 days (19th Frost '05 - 23rd Frost)

Adventurers

Jonas	Earth	Male	Human	
Falco	Celestial Shadow	Male	Human	Leader
Hamish	Wiccan	Male	Human	
Sam The Ork	Earth	Male	Orc	
Grizelda Feldspar	Wiccan	Female	Giant	
Aurora Steelwind	Air	Female	Elf	Scribe

Employer

A plant hive mind

Plane

Deodar

Places visited

Forest with a hive mind in it
Ruined city full of rats

People met

Avon
Leia - cat/human shapeshifter
Silermeade
Tamalade the Black - the forest king
Dragon
Sir

Mission

Prevent a swarm of undead from attacking the forest

The Hive Mind Adventure

The trip back was again by boat. Dirk had decided to stay back to some reason or other, and we were joined by another Seagate Guild member, an Earth Mage named Jonas. Also on board was a sage who was planning on hiring a Guild party and a fat merchant complete with entourage. He was transporting a coffin to Seagate and he claimed that the contents contained information that would greatly aid in the fight against the Dark Circle. So he was planning on selling it to the Guild for lots of filthy lucre.

19th Frost

Third day in the boat. I was spending most of the trip below decks. However, I did come out every so often for fresh air. During one of these above deck excursions, the call went up that a crewmember was missing. Immediately a search was instigated, with negative results.

“Where will you find the missing sailor?”

In hell perhaps?

Later on that day, the lookout spotted a raft adrift. On it appeared to me a woman and child. So the ship changed course in order to do a pickup. However, as we got closer, something must have spooked the captain as he immediately ordered the ship to go hard about and away at full sail. At the same time we noticed some sort of jelly in the water and the woman raised her hand. Immediately a black shaft of darkness came down and bore down on the ship. She also had a staff that pointed towards the expanding cone of darkness.

We attempted to disrupt the magic with missile fire while the ship's crew attempted to get away from there. Unfortunately, the ship hit the darkness ... and everything went nuts. I remember being hurled into the water then the ship turning over and falling on me. I really thought I was going to drown this time, and this was the second time this had happened. Definitely no more travelling on ships for this elf.

I had a vague memory of struggling through pitch black water but the next clear memory was waking up for semi-consciousness in one of the holds with Grizelda bending over me. The ship was upside down but, fortunately, there was plenty of air trapped inside. There would have been more if I had learnt the Air Spring ritual.

Only a handful of the crew, the sage, and the merchant had survived. The captain was gone, but the First Mate, a water mage, was still there. Some of our party were also missing but they soon found their way in.

We were definitely off-plane. The water around us was black and dangerous. According to the first mate, it was unbreathable as well. There were some strange sounds coming from outside as well. It was just as well that I hadn't reached the surface as the air above was poisonous as well.

Sam recognised the strange sounds as whale song so managed to communicate with them. Meanwhile Hamish had got himself into trouble poking in the merchant's cabin to examine that coffin and was caught. Fortunately we were able to soothe the outraged merchant.

A short while later, a human male came up out of the hatch. He was wearing a skin tight suit

which generated an air bubble around the head. He told us his name was Avon and we were in an ocean between planes. Currently we were in the Black Ocean but there were other colours as well. He was on his way to a portal so he could find his way to his home plane. According to the earth mages, he didn't have an aura.

Once our situation was explained, he offered to take all of us with him to extend his crew. To get us over to his vessel, a series of cylinders towed by whales, he provided us with some of those skin tight suits. They were white and slightly translucent and he said that there wasn't enough room to wear anything underneath. I'll have to experiment with thin cloth.

So we got on board his cylinders and headed off in the direction of the portal. He told us it was sealed but on the other side is a hive mind that could open a portal to his home plane, and probably ours too. I made myself useful helping to care for the wounded along with Grizelda. Basically there were three capsules that were spare. We were in one, the ships crew in another, and the sage, the merchant, the merchant's entourage and the coffin in a third.

23rd Frost

The trip was fairly uneventful except for some sort of snake attempting to gain entrance to one of the cylinders. It was soon fought off though.

Finally we reached the designated co-ordinates and Avon activated the device to bust through the portal. When it opened we headed towards it, and noticed a current pulling us towards the portal. Something felt very wrong, which was confirmed when we went through and noticed that, instead of being in water, we were high in the air above a dried up ocean bed and starting to fall rapidly. No wonder it was sealed. Anyway, we managed to get fly spells on and abandoned the doomed capsules before they smashed to bits on the ground. Only us, Avon, and his cat companion Leia, were able to escape the destruction. Anything left inside the capsules were irretrievably lost, including the sage, the merchant etc, and the coffin plus it's contents.

.2.

Avon was in a semi-comatose state which Leia explained was some sort of mental trauma which was caused by an old injury. We then assessed our situation. All we had was what was on us. I had lost my bows for instance. A aerial reconnaissance told us that we had landed on a dried up ocean floor and the only local plant life were lichens. A chasm was nearby which had a ruined city on one side of it.

Avon came around in an hour or so. He told us that he was expecting to contact a plant hive mind. Obviously not here so we flew to what had been the shore. Here we could see lots of growth. A forest extended as far as we could see. One of the trees Daed as a long lived sentient and we discovered we were on the plane of Deodar. We couldn't see any flowers. Didn't seem to be any insects either.

Suddenly a voice called out "Who are you people". After explanations, he told us his name was Silermeade and he was a wild man as opposed to a city dweller. He would take us to a deserted city in the forest, usually used as neutral territory.

It was about then that I was scratched in the cheek by a nearby thorn. I hardly felt it but, after a

short while the wound was inflamed and started itching. Silemeade took one look and gravely announced that I had been poisoned and would die in a day. He had no idea how to fix it but someone in the city might. So we flew over the jungle for an hour and a half and landed in what was a settlement in the trees. There we were introduced to Tamalane the Black, a seven foot tall black man wearing green, leafy breastplate, a sword and a thorny crown. He was the king and with him was his lady Ziar. There was also a warrior type who was looking at us with loathing. No, they hadn't heard of poisoning or knew of a cure. In fact, they were naturally immune after several generations in the forest.

There was a creature in the wildlands that could communicate with the hive mind. The king also told us he was looking for a place that humans could call their own and planned to cut a deal with the hive mind.. That was when this over, hooded and cloaked person came in and argued that the hive mind does not keep bargains. His name was Dragon and Daed as an extremely long lived sentient. He also said he could heal me but refused to do so unless we agreed to have nothing to do with the hive mind. Since we needed the hive mind to get home, we refused.

We were just about to take off to fly to the hive mind, even as I was feeling weaker, another hooded and cloaked person arrived. This turned out to be an entity similar to Dragon who was known as Sir. We also got the strong impression that he was the current spokesperson. Anyway, he agreed to heal me but part of the cure involved having to strip off completely in front of everybody. Grizelda did what she could to preserve my modesty but I was sure Sam deliberately attempting to get a good look. I must have been glowing red by the time the curing ritual was complete and attempting to break the record for getting clothes back on.

Once that was complete, we flew off, along with the king and Sir, flying west into the setting sun, going deeper into the forest. It was dark by the time we reached what appeared to be a mountain peak that was just visible above the treeline and we were directed to fly down to the base. Down there was the entrance to a thorny hedge maze, guarded by creatures with spears and blowpipes. Inside, past the maze, was a pit which contained what seemed to be some sort of blobby organism. Green plants were all around and the blob was enveloped in a blue glow. This was the core of the hive mind.

The king wanted the city by the chasm, but the hive mind told us that there was a problem with it. However, our arrival could be a means to fix it. Basically an army of undead were pouring out of the place and marching straight towards the forest, presumably on a mission of destruction. While the king was charged to organise a defence of the forest and the hive mind by uniting all the humans, we were tasked to go to the city and deal with the source. Incidentally the hive mind also said that it had shut the portal we had come through.

So we prepared for the assault. I managed to get one of the native bows and also got bark breastplate to help protect me further. I also borrowed a short sword off Jonas, just in case.

Sam - "I drunk my father's vomit" .

Falco - "How did that come up?"

24th Frost

Flew towards the ruined city and saw the undead army, mostly zombies, making their way towards the forest from the city. Also, they looked very uniform in appearance, as they were of the same race, as opposed to the forest folk who were a mixture. On the way, they went right

over our crash site. Hamish did a precognitive vision to see what we were up against and saw a dark shape as well as eight rats with their tails intertwined together.

.3.

Sir and Avon were with us as we approached the city. As we got closer we could see a blue haze around it. Analysis told us that it was the remains of some sort of preservation magics. The city itself was two miles in diameter and roughly circular. At the centre was an arch so we landed upon it. As we did we could feel it was called the Arch of Despair below which was the Boulevard of Broken Dreams.

Zombies were pouring out of holes and cracks to join the exodus and many of them were close enough to read their auras. That told us that the controlling entity is something called a Fusion Demon and these zombies had only been raised in the last few hours. The college of the controlling magic was a mixture of mind and necromancy. The cause of death was some sort of powerful death magic from the College of Death Magic. I was sure that was one college the Guild would really want the counterspells for.

The arch was sixty foot high and all of us were walking unseen so the zombies took no notice, at least until the arguments started. That was when they started throwing rocks. I shuffled away from the others and took aim with a prepared arrow in the bow, just in case. Instead we flew off again landing just outside the city.

A bit more planning, then we headed back into the city, this time going to the rear of the city where there was little or no undead. There, we went down steps into a tunnel. At the end we found a magical portal which led to a place called Refuge. It blocked the otherwise deadend tunnel. Fortunately it was two way.

Hamish and the cat went through first followed by the rest of us. The tunnel on the other side was identical and there was quite a bit of black goop on the floor that had flowed in from the Black Sea.

Continuing on down the tunnel we found a crack in the wall. In the crack we briefly saw a rat but it vanished into the darkness. Just then insubstantial shapes rose up around us becoming ghosts. A few of us stayed our ground but many of the party fled in fear. They wanted revenge and claimed that Dragon had betrayed them and caused their death. However the tunnel had been created by a Shaper as well as having Protection from Death Magic installed in it. Maybe they were just unlucky. Meanwhile they faded back into the ground.

Finally we reassembled. Hamish managed to capture us a rat and we found out where the King Rat was. We were also told that the Rat King sent out the zombies however he didn't seem to be acting himself since a few days ago. It was also possible that the King Rat knew we were talking to this rat.

We headed in to confront the King Rat and found it, or them, eight rats with their tails entwined together, making a more powerful entity. Also there were several rats as well as black goop all over the floor, at least six inches deep. Other tunnels led off this chamber we were in.

A massive fight started between us and the rats which was very confusing. I was knocked over

and rendered unconscious. Fortunately the rat king had been mostly lifted up out of the goop by Sam's Hands of Earth and the rat components that were still in the goop had been rendered unconscious. That broke what we believed was the possession that the black goop had over the rat king. Grizelda and I went over and used her shield to lift the rest of the rat king out of the goop to allow it to relink its components but Sam then dispelled the hands causing the king rat to drop into the goop again. We managed to get it out until Jonas and the cat leapt on the shield knocking the rats back off again.

We finally bailed as more rats were coming and headed back to the forest. The only conclusion we came to was that the black goop were using the zombies to search for Dragon in order to carry out the spirit's request. It did seem like that was what they were doing when we reported back. Sir had also vanished.

Since there seemed to be no obvious threat now, the hive mind opened a portal and sent us back to Alusia.